

## Reflecting on 20 Years Of Legislative Achievements

**T**he restoration of the Chesapeake Bay began twenty years ago, with the signing of the *1983 Chesapeake Bay Agreement*. The Chesapeake Bay Commission and its partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program – the Governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – believed that through cooperation and partnership, using regulation and incentive, they could reverse decades of man-made decline in our nation’s most abundant estuary.

Perhaps no other activity better defines the work of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and its role as a Bay Program partner than its efforts to advance legislation at the state and federal levels. Since its inception in 1980, the Commission has recognized that each Bay state must devise its own approach to the problems facing the Chesapeake in order to address the cultural, financial and ecological conditions of its jurisdiction. It also recognizes that to do so, the legislative branches of each jurisdiction must be fully engaged in devising that approach.

The list on the following page reflects both the breadth of subject and the diversity of approaches that have been used. In many cases, a watershed-wide approach has been achieved, as with the passage of phosphate detergent bans throughout the region. In other instances, such as the management of fisheries

whose habitats extend beyond the waters of the Bay, Federal legislation has been the appropriate vehicle.

Regardless, the list stands as testimony to the dedication of the state General Assemblies and the U.S. Congress in the protection of the Bay. Together, they have laid a strong foundation of environmental law in the region that has contributed sizably to the restoration of the Bay. The Commission has played an instrumental part in this effort.

The legislators who have been a part of the Commission are proud of the laws that they have passed in defense of the Chesapeake Bay. Clearly, the work of the Commission, the General Assemblies and the partners in the Bay Program is far from complete. The rate of nutrient reduction must be doubled. More habitats must be protected and restored. And land management approaches must be fine-tuned. This list, then, serves as testimony to the accomplishments to date and as an inspiration for what more needs to be done.

### What Is the Chesapeake Bay Commission?

**T**he Commission is a tri-state legislative authority created in 1980 to advise the General Assemblies of Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania on matters of Baywide concern.

Twenty-one members define the Commission's identity and its workload. Drawn equally from the states, 15 are legislators, three are Cabinet members, and three are prominent citizens.

# Legislation and Major Policy Initiatives

## Nutrient/Sediment Pollution

Virginia Water and Sewer Assistance Authority [VA 1984]  
 Virginia Water Facilities Revolving Fund [VA 1986]  
 Phosphate Detergent Bans in the watershed [MD 1985, VA 1987, PA 1989]  
 Erosion and Sediment Control [PA, MD, VA – mid to late 1980s]  
 Sewage Treatment Plant Compliance [MD 1990]  
 Stormwater Control Legislation [VA 1991; MD 1982, 1985]  
 Nutrient Management Act [PA 1993]  
 Forestry Bad Actor Law [VA 1993]  
 Nutrient Management Certification Program [VA 1994; MD 1993]  
 Ag-Linked Investment Program [PA 1994]  
 Agricultural Bad Actor Law [VA 1996]  
 Virginia Water Quality Improvement Act of 1997  
 Tributary Strategies Act [VA 1997]  
 Maryland Water Quality Improvement Act of 1988  
 Poultry Waste Legislation [VA 1999]  
 Animal Waste Technology Fund [MD 1999]  
 Sewer Overflow and Treatment Plant Bypass Reporting [MD 2001]

## Living Resources

Striped Bass Management Act [Fed 1988]  
 Clean Vessel Act [Federal 1991]  
 Susquehanna River Fish Passage Resolutions [MD, VA, PA 1992]  
 National Invasive Species Act of 1996, US, October 1996 [Federal 1996]  
 Fisheries Management Plan legislation [MD 1997; VA 1996, 1995, 1992]  
 Prohibition on Hydraulic Clam Dredging [MD 1998]  
 Bi-State Blue Crab Strategy Development [MD, VA 1999]  
 Recreational Crab License [MD 2001]  
 SAV Protection Zones [MD 2002]

## Land Stewardship

Critical Area Protection Law [MD 1984-85]  
 Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act [VA 1988]  
 Growth Management Commission [VA 1989]  
 Farmland Conservation Program–Agricultural Area Security Law [PA 1989]  
 The Consolidated Lands Preservation Act [MD 1990]  
 Wetlands Act enforcement legislation [VA 1990]  
 Land Conservation Fund [VA 1991]

Income Tax Credit Legislation [VA 1991]  
 Forest Conservation Act [MD 1991]  
 Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act [MD 1992]  
 Land Recycling & Environmental Remediation Standards Act [PA 1995]  
 Phragmites Control Legislation [MD 1996]  
 Smart Growth Legislation (series of three bills — Brownfields, Rural Legacy, Smart Growth) [MD 1997]  
 Open Space Lands Preservation Act [VA 1997]  
 National Forest Buffer Initiative [NRCS 1997]  
 Supplemental Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program [PA 1999]  
 Municipalities Planning Code Omnibus Amendments (Sustainable Growth) [PA 2000]

## Others

Clean Water Act of 1987 [Federal]  
 Oil Spill Prevention, Liability and Compensation legislation [MD 1990, VA 1991]  
 Conservation and Recreational Foundation [VA 1992]  
 Environmental Education Legislation [PA 1993]  
 Vehicle Emissions Control Legislation [PA 1992, VA and MD 1993]  
 Recreational Boat Pollution [MD 1992, 1994, 1999]  
 Farm Bill [Federal, 1996 and 2002]  
 VA Chesapeake Bay Partnership Council [VA 1996]  
 Water Quality Toxics Legislation [VA 1997]  
 Small Watershed Grants Program [Federal 1997]  
 Clean Water Action Plan [Federal 1998]  
 Chesapeake Bay Gateways Act [Federal 1998]  
 Environmental Stewardship & Watershed Protection Act (Growing Greener) [PA 1999]  
 Marine Habitat and Waterways Improvement Fund [VA 2000]  
 Water Resources Planning Act [PA 2002]



## Chesapeake Bay Commission Policy for the Bay

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